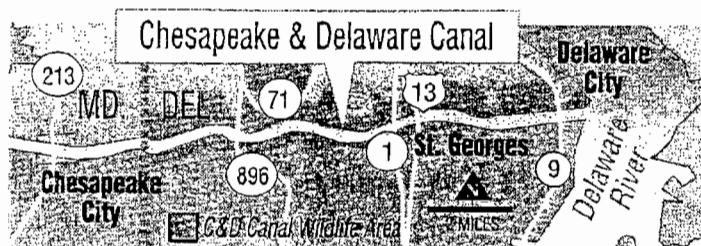


# The News Journal

[www.delawareonline.com](http://www.delawareonline.com)

FRIDAY Dec. 3, 2004



The News Journal

## Castle secures \$150,000 for canal park planning

Lawmaker aims to preserve nature environment

By SEAN O'SULLIVAN  
The News Journal

Don't expect ball fields and tennis courts — but plans to offer more recreational opportunities on the federally owned land around the Chesapeake & Delaware Canal will get a jump-start in the coming week.

Rep. Mike Castle, R-Del., said Thursday he was able to get a provision setting aside \$150,000 to study the idea and develop a plan into the omnibus spending bill to be signed by President Bush next week.

"That was the amount we were trying to get for the entire thing," Castle said.

New Castle County, the state Department of Transportation and Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control have all pledged money or in-kind services to the project, bringing the total available for the work to \$300,000.

Castle said the additional money means the Army Corps of Engineers study will now be more extensive and detailed than originally planned. There is more than 9,000 acres of government-owned land on either side of the 14-mile canal that cuts across Delaware and Maryland, linking the Delaware River with the Chesapeake Bay.

Castle envisions a park that

would preserve the natural character of the land along the canal while improving recreational opportunities.

"We should not overdevelop it," he said, adding that creating ball fields would be too much.

Organizers want to preserve existing hunting and fishing opportunities while paving some trails and adding restrooms, parking lots and signs to make it more accessible.

"We are not going to waste any time on this," said Castle, noting the first organizational meeting for the nearly year-long study is Monday at the offices of DNREC.

The study will include reviewing past and present recreational studies in the area, holding public meetings and developing detailed plans with cost estimates. The creation of the park would also likely involve hiring park rangers.

Incoming New Castle County Executive Chris Coons and representatives of Sens. Joe Biden and Tom Carper, both D-Del., support the idea. Coons said he hopes to tie the park into a network of county parks.

Castle said projects of this type are a team effort. "And if we don't work together, we won't get it done."

Contact Sean O'Sullivan at 324-2777  
or [sosullivan@delawareonline.com](mailto:sosullivan@delawareonline.com).